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VALERIE MASON-JOHN, D. PARAMABANDHU GROVES

Eight Step Recovery



Using the Buddha's teachings
to OVERCOME ADDICTION

Foreword by Gabor Maté, M.D., author of
In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction

MEDIA KIT

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DR PARAMABANDHU GROVES

The Eight Steps of this book help you discover a richer and more fulfilling way of living.

“‘The Buddha was in recovery’. Taking this bold statement as a starting point, this wonderful book shows how we are all addicted to aspects of life and can all benefit from training our minds and hearts to be free of the tyranny of compulsion. The Mindfulness-Based Addiction Recovery (MBAR) programme draws on a wide range of the Buddha’s practical, yet deeply profound, teachings. Over the eight steps you are given a priceless gift – the possibility to gain mastery over your mind and heart and find freedom.” *Vidyamala Burch, founder and co-director of Breathworks, author of Mindfulness for Health*

“Through Buddhist teachings, personal experiences, and case examples, this book provides a wise illustration of the fundamental processes underlying a broad range of addictive behaviors. Mason-John and Groves offer here a practical and compassionate step-by-step guide to freedom from the deep trappings and suffering of addiction.” *Sarah Bowen, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, University of Washington, author of Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention for Addictive Behaviors: A Clinician’s Guide*

“Blending the MBAR program with traditional Buddhist teachings and personal stories, the authors give us a wise and compassionate approach to recovery from the range of addictions. This comprehensive approach will be a valuable tool for addicts and addiction professionals alike.” *Kevin Griffin, author of One Breath at a Time: Buddhism and the Twelve Steps*

“The eight steps outlined here provide a simple, wise and practical approach to recovery from a wide range of compulsive patterns of behavior associated with suffering. They provide a spiritual pathway to recovery for people from any faith tradition, as well as for those who are not religious, and for those who suffer from addiction as well as those who are simply aware of the suffering associated with the human condition. This is a book for everyone!” *Professor Chris Cook, Director of the Project for Spirituality, Theology & Health, Durham University*

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Meditation and the teachings of the Buddha saved **Valerie Mason-John's** life. Abandoned at six weeks, she went into foster homes, orphanages and lived on the streets. At 15, she was locked up for shoplifting; aged 17 she walked back out into the world with her new addiction, anorexia/bulimia nervosa, one that almost cost her life. After being introduced to meditation at 27, she was gradually released from the hell of her addiction by the practices of loving kindness, mindfulness and the teachings of the Buddha.

Once an international correspondent covering Aboriginal land rights, she was named one of Britain's leading black female journalists and awarded an honorary doctorate for her contributions to the African and Asian Diaspora. She was also named one of Britain's black gay icons, but retired from the black and gay scene to focus on her spiritual life. Through reflection she came to see what she had to offer the world was her recovery.

Mason-John works as a consultant in Conflict Transformation, Restorative Justice, Leadership and Anti-Bullying in the domestic field of education, social services, youth, addiction and the police, as well as in the corporate world. She is the author of seven books, including *Detox Your Heart* and *Broken Voices*. She was ordained into the Triratna Buddhist Order in 2005 and given the name 'Vimalasara'. She lives in British Columbia, and is based at the Vancouver Buddhist Centre, where she leads a weekly meditation class for people in recovery from addiction. www.valeriemason-john.com



Dr Paramabandhu Groves is a consultant psychiatrist working in the National Health Service in the UK, and has specialized in the field of addiction for 20 years. He trained in medicine at Cambridge University and University College London, and is a member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the chair of the College's Spirituality and Psychiatry Special Interest Group. He has also trained and worked as a Core Process Psychotherapist.

He is the clinical director of Breathing Space, which is the health and well-being wing of the London Buddhist Centre, teaching mindfulness-based approaches to help with depression, addiction and stress. He developed the Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention course for addiction, which has successfully run in both the UK and Canada. He recently developed Kindness Behaviour Training (KBT) to complement the mindfulness courses at Breathing Space. He is the author of *Practical Buddhism: Mindfulness and Skillful Living in the Modern Era*, and has published academic papers and contributed to several books in the field of addiction.

Groves was ordained into the Triratna Buddhist Order in 1990. He has lived and taught at the London Buddhist Centre for over 20 years.

WHO IS THIS BOOK FOR?

From the Introduction: “These Eight Steps are aimed at anyone who is struggling with an addiction or compulsive behaviour. As well as drug, alcohol and gambling addictions, the book is for people who experience compulsive or addictive aspects to eating, sex or other behaviours. Although we recognize that recovering from addiction can be a matter of life or death for some people, this book is also for people who do not think of themselves as having an addiction, but who have habits that are harmful in their lives. We hope the book will be of value to professionals working in the field of addiction, as well as those caring for someone with an addiction, or in relationship with a person struggling with addiction.

“We can’t avoid suffering if we open our eyes to it. Suffering is all around us. However, freedom from suffering is in front of our eyes too. Some of us, who realize our difficult human predicament, reach a crisis and turn to a spiritual path, faith or religion to deal with the shock. Others turn to an addiction for answers to the meaning of life. Fortunately, addiction itself and its suffering can lead people into the doors of a Buddhist temple, a church, a mosque, a synagogue, and many other places that offer some type of solace.

“Our book draws on the teachings of the Buddha, but the Steps can be used by someone from any religious or spiritual tradition or from none. In the spirit of the Buddha’s advice to some of his disciples, we encourage you to test out the teachings here in your own experience and utilize those you find helpful.”

THE EIGHT STEPS

One: Accepting that this human life will bring suffering

Two: Seeing how we create extra suffering in our lives

Three: Embracing impermanence shows us that our suffering can end

Four: Being willing to step onto the path of recovery – and discover freedom

Five: Transforming our speech, actions and livelihood

Six: Placing positive values at the centre of our lives

Seven: Making every effort to stay on the path of recovery

Eight: Helping others by sharing the benefits we have gained

FROM THE FOREWORD by Gabor Maté MD, author of
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The eight steps taught here may be seen as eight principles to live by. We begin by accepting that whatever we have suffered – and some do suffer more than others – our pain is not ours alone, not personal, but simply a way life may show up while we are in this world. The other steps lead us away from the path of creating more suffering for ourselves and, gradually, onto the path of compassion for others.

It takes practice. In this volume Vimalasara (Valerie) and Paramabandhu gently introduce us to the practice of breathing and self-awareness, beginning with small increments, until breathing and awareness become the anchors for us being grounded in all the eight steps.

There is no one fail-safe way out of addiction. Nothing works for everyone. Challenged by addiction to substances or to behaviors that generate more pain, we need to find the right path for ourselves. Twelve steps, five steps, no steps, eight steps: what is right is what works. The eight steps here recommended may be the primary path for many, but they can also be a powerful support to anyone, no matter what the addiction and no matter what path they are on.

Mindful awareness, conscious breathing, being present in our body, compassion for ourselves and toward others: addicted or not – and most of us are, in some way – these qualities and practices can serve us all.

For more information, excerpts from the book, and to arrange interviews with the authors, please contact: Hannah Atkinson at info@windhorsepublications.com
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